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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the activities and outcomes an inservice training model. This model was designed to help states provide ongoing training to early intervention, early childhood, and vision personnel. The focus is on personnel that specialize inserving visually impaired children from time of birth to age five. The purpose of the project is to assist states in implementing the VIISA Inservice Training Model thorough the use of each state's instructors. These state instructors are trained by a national instructor who works with them through their first course series. The project works closely with a statewide task force to implement the model in a manner that fits with each state's structure, funding sources, and needs. The project's VIISA training model has been used on an ongoing basis in 22 states, resulting in a total of 82 training courses conducted for 1,334 professionals, which have affected the lives of 3,455 visually impaired infants and preschoolers and their families. The report discusses the conceptual framework of the model, logistical problems and how they were solved, the model's impact, evaluation findings, and future activities. Appendices include materials developed by the project. (CR)

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Final Report
to
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Special Education Programs

Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities Outreach Projects CFDA 84.042D

Project VIISA Outreach

Outreach Services to Assist States to Replicate a Training Model for Early Interventionists in a Low Incidence Disability Condition: Blindness and Visual Impairment

Award # H024D70036
Project Period 10/1/97-9/30/2000

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Abstract	1
II.	Conceptual Framework and Description of the model	3
III.	Logistical Problems and How They Were Solved	10
IV.	Impact	12
V.	Evaluation Findings	14
VI.	Final Report on Objectives and Activities of the Project Over the Three Year Grant Period	25
VII.	Future Activities	31
VIII.	Assurance Statement	32
IX.	Appendixes	33

I. Abstract

Project VIISA is an inservice training model that was developed to assist states in building their capacity to provide needed training on an ongoing basis to early intervention, early child-hood, and vision personnel serving children birth to five with blindness and visual impairment and their families.

The purpose of this Outreach Project is to assist states in implementing the VIISA Inservice Training model through the use of their own state instructors. These state instructors are trained by a national VIISA instructor who also works closely with them through their first course series. They are prepared to teach the VIISA courses to professionals in their state needing the training. The VIISA project works closely with a statewide task force to implement the model in a manner that fits with the state's structure, funding, sources, and needs. This task force selects a primary contact person for the project to work with. The project provides ongoing technical assistance to states implementing the training model.

The VIISA Inservice Training Model was developed through an EEPCD model inservice training grant from 1991-1994. Through this first grant, materials and procedures for two courses on working with young children with blindness and visual impairment were developed and field tested.

Through two subsequent outreach grants, 1994-97 and 1997-2000, the VIISA training model has been used on an ongoing basis in 22 states resulting in a total of 82 training courses conducted for 1334 professionals, impacting the lives of 3,455 infants and preschoolers with blindness and visual impairments and their families. These trainings and the materials used in the courses have been rated highly by a majority of the participants. Here are some representative comments.

> *"Empowerment as a teacher of the visually impaired with restored enthusiasm was personally important to me. It has been so very long since I received valuable professional development in visual impairment at the preschool level."*

"VIISA has taught me more about vision impairment, gave me ideas to use with children and families, and gave me a network of professionals to call upon."

"I don't know when I've ever had a class that has taught me so much of a practical nature. Every bit of it has applied to my work."

Throughout each grant period, project staff continued to update and improve upon the courses and training materials. These new materials were passed on to implementing states.

II. Conceptual Framework and Description of the Model

Rationale

The CDC estimated that in 1994-95, 65,000 children, ages birth to five, nationwide, have "serious difficulty seeing". More information is gained in a shorter period of time through the eyes than through any other sense. A visual impairment can result in severe, if sometimes subtle, developmental delays in all areas and acquisition of secondary disabilities, particularly in the absence of appropriate intervention.

As a result of the IDEA, many infants and young children with vision impairment are being served by programs in their own communities. Many of the staff members working for these programs need information and training to better understand the effect of vision impairment on learning and strategies to address this developmental impact. In addition, they need support services from professionals knowledgeable and experienced in working with these children to assist in assessment, programming, making adaptations and accessing appropriate materials and resources.

Because of a shortage of teachers trained in the field of vision, many of the early intervention programs serving preschool aged children with visual impairments do not have access to adequate support services from a teacher of the visually impaired. Only 20 out of 50 states have personnel preparation programs in vision. These few programs have been facing cutbacks in basic support from their prospective states and the federal government due to conflicts in human service needs and balanced budget initiatives. The future of programs to train personnel to serve children with visual impairments is at best "guarded" (Silberman, Corn, & Sowell, 1996). In addition, few university training programs have addressed the unique programmatic aspects of serving visually impaired infants, toddlers and preschoolers in the depth and manner that are now required.

Since many states have not been able to develop and implement an ongoing teacher training program in preschool vision or a system of inservice training for the professionals who serve young children with vision impairments, a great need continues to exist to assist states to provide this training. Herein lies the unique contribution of the VIISA Outreach Project.

Description of the Model

The VIISA Inservice Model, processes and materials will be described in the next few pages.

Process for Setting Up VIISA Inservice Training

State task force requests VIISA assistance → Agreement negotiated → National VIISA instructor assists in planning and preparation → State training team selected and trained

First VIISA course conducted by state training team and national instructor → Follow-up activities, technical assistance → Second VIISA course conducted by state training team and national instructor → Follow-up activities, technical assistance

Coordination with Implementation Sites. States interested in VIISA form a task force consisting of representatives from the early intervention (Part C), early childhood (Part B), state vision services, and consumer/ parent groups. A state contact person is assigned to work directly with the project office in Utah and a national VIISA instructor is assigned to work with each state. These national instructors are educators experienced and certified in working with young children with visual impairments. They have been integrally involved in the development of the VIISA inservice content, materials and procedures with regular input from users and implementation sites. These individuals are:

- Irene Topor, Ph.D., University of Arizona and ASDB, Tucson
- Deborah Gleason, M.Ed., Perkins School for the Blind, Boston
- Lois Hammett, M.Ed., Tennessee Infant Parent Services, Knoxville
- Tanni L. Anthony Ed.S., Colorado State Department of Education, Denver
- Elizabeth Morgan Dennison, M.Ed., SKI-HI Institute, Utah State University, Logan, Director of the VIISA Project
- Sheri Moore, Ph.D., University of Louisville, Kentucky

Site Development and Assistance in Replicating Model. If there is sufficient interest in the VIISA Inservice Training Model, the state lead agency(ies) write a letter of request and apply for outreach services. This material is reviewed by project staff and may be discussed further

with the state by phone. Once a state is selected, a written agreement is negotiated. Criteria for selection include such things as: commitment of personnel and financial resources to the project; a commitment to continue VIISA-based services after outreach assistance ceases; and demonstrated need as evidenced by numbers of children birth to five with visual impairment as well as professionals needing training.

Early in the implementation process, a national VIISA instructor travels onsite to familiarize the task force with the model and materials, and to help them plan step-by-step how they will implement the inservice model and assemble their training teams. The state task force is given a Management Manual which provides them with guidelines for implementing the inservice model. The national instructor works closely with them in selecting a pool of people for their state VIISA training team.

The State Training Team. A few months later, the national VIISA instructor returns to the state for three days to train the individuals selected (called state instructors) for the state training team. Topics covered in this training include: strategies for working with adult learners; VIISA course procedures; reading, providing feedback on and grading home study assignments; familiarization with the training package (print materials and media); presentation techniques; working as teams; and use of resources. These training teams typically consist of vision and early intervention/childhood professionals who have knowledge of and experience with this population of children, and whenever possible, a parent. They are also people who demonstrate leadership qualities, an ability to communicate well with adults, and a desire to grow professionally. These state instructors may be involved in a variety of ways, depending on their interests, skills, and time.

A participating state receives a complimentary set of training package materials and purchases any additional sets needed. These include the following materials for the courses: VIISA text, instructor manuals, a master of the homestudy manuals, a master set of handouts and white transparencies, set of slides, and a set of five training videotapes developed by the project.

The Courses. The first VIISA course focuses on working with infants and toddlers with blindness and visual impairments and their families in the home or other care setting and the second course focuses on working with preschoolers, ages 3 to 5, and their families in center-based settings.

Each course is taught over a 3 to 4 month period and consists of: (1) An initial

2 to 2 ½-day onsite class at a central location; (2) 4-7 home study units with readings and written assignments to be mailed to the instructor. Some of these assignments involve observations and hands-on practicum experiences with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are blind and visually impaired; (3) A final 2-2 ½ day onsite class with the instructor at a central location. Participant evaluation is based on completion of home study assignments, attendance and participation at the two onsite classes. CEU and college credit is often available.

The assignments with course requirements, grading procedures, and additional readings are contained in a home study manual for each participant. The assignments involve reading of materials, applying what the participant has learned to real life situations with children and families in their local programs, and then evaluating how these experiences worked out.

Participants have a variety of assignments in each unit to choose from to fit their individual needs and situations. They are encouraged to work on at least one assignment in teams and to obtain a peer review on at least two. Assignments are mailed to the instructor(s) for feedback and returned to the participant. Participants have an opportunity to redo assignments if they wish to take the time to improve their work.

A variety of teaching methods and materials are used in the onsite classes. These include lecture, discussion, video tapes, handouts, demonstrations, small group work, observation, reflection, practical experiences, sharing and exposure to resource materials.

Through the courses, participants become acquainted with the specialized learning needs of young children with visual impairments as well as the concerns of their families. They are familiarized with a variety of teaching strategies, curricula, assessment tools, and learning materials appropriate for use with this population. Participants also learn how to access services from agencies and professionals that deal specifically with vision impairment.

Course Materials. The participant homestudy manuals contain readings from current publications in the vision as well as early intervention/childhood field. The primary text for both courses is the two-volume, 1060- page VIISA Resource Manual for early intervention and early childhood personnel working with children who are blind and visually impaired. It was developed by the SKI•HI Institute at Utah State University with the help of a variety of professionals from across the nation who have worked with young children with visual impairments. The instructor manuals have been developed by project staff. Project VIISA

updates its training materials yearly and develops new ones in order to provide needed and current materials for both instructors and course participants.

Preparations for the First Course Series. The national VIISA instructor works closely with the state training team and state contact as they prepare to conduct the first VIISA course series in their state. Usually, they begin with the Infant/Toddler course, then conduct the Preschool course. Information on the training is sent to vision, early intervention, and early childhood professionals and programs statewide. Interested participants send in applications and 25 are chosen to participate in each course. Priority is given to personnel working with an infant, toddler, or preschooler who is visually impaired in an early intervention or preschool program.

Conducting the First Course Series. The national instructor returns to the state to co-teach the first onsite class with the state training team. She provides support to the team, debriefs with them after the onsite, gives them feedback on some of the home study assignments they have already graded, and helps them begin to plan for the next onsite class. She then discusses with the team the kinds of support they need from her through the rest of the class.

The national instructor continues to work with the state contact and training team to plan for the second course. The same steps as described above are followed for the second course.

Follow-up Activities and Technical Assistance. Project staff continue to work closely with the state contact and training team by phone/mail. If need be, the national instructor may travel onsite to assist the state in further refining their implementation of the model. The VIISA project may facilitate linking of states with similar concerns. Other technical assistance activities may include support for the state instructor network (e.g., newsletter, e-group, webCT site), periodic phone calls and letters, conference calls with state contacts in multiple states, website and vision related topics at regional conferences.

VIISA Course Format and Content

Course 1: Infants, Toddlers and Their Families

Course 2: Preschoolers in Center-Based Settings

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Registration by Mail

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Text and Home Study Manual

Mailed to Participants

- at least one month before first onsite class

↓

Participants Complete First Home Study Unit

- read and mail first assignment in to instructor(s)

↓

Participants Attend First Onsite Class

- 2 to 2 ½ days face-to-face with instructor(s) at a central location
- receive first assignment back with feedback
- discussions, lecture, video, small group work, activities, network

↓

Course 1, Onsite 1 Topics

- Vision Impairment and Effects on Learning and Development
- Simulation Experiences
- Implications of Eye Disorders
- Eye Specialists and Eye Reports
- Visual Development, Assessment, and Intervention
- Touch and Hearing
- Attachment, Communication, Social

Course 2, Onsite 1 Topics

- Working with Preschoolers in Center-Based Settings
- Interacting with People (language and social skills)
- Literacy Issues and Reading Readiness
- Reading Medium: Braille, Print, Listening
- Activities of Daily Living

↓

Participants Complete Remaining Home Study Units Between Onsite 1 and 2

- have 2-3 weeks to complete each unit and mail assignments in
- receive assignments back with feedback every 2-3 weeks
- build resource file
- over half are practicum type to be done with actual children and families
- one assignment done in collaboration with another course participant
- peer reviews on two assignments

Course 1 Homestudy Units

- Vision
- Attachment, Communication, Social Childcare Routines
- Motor, Orientation and Mobility for Infants and Toddlers
- Use of Touch and Hearing
- Interaction with Objects: Play, Cognition, Concepts

Course 2 Homestudy Units

- Interacting with People
- Use of Functional Vision and Reading Readiness
- Braille Readiness and Listening Skills
- Self-Care and Independence
- Orientation and Mobility (O&M)
- Cognition and Concept Development
- Assessment and the IEP

Participants Attend Second Onsite Class

- 2 to 2 ½ days face-to-face with instructor at a central location
- bring with them ideas and materials to share
- discussions, lecture, video, small group work, activities, sharing ideas/ resources

Course 1, Onsite 2 Topics

- Motor, Orientation and Mobility
- Interaction with Objects, Play and Cognition
- Childcare Routines(Feeding and Sleep)
- Prematurity and Vulnerable Infants
- Assessment Tools and Strategies
- Working with Families
- Practices in Early Intervention
- Strategies for Successful Transitions

Course 2, Onsite 2 Topics

- Cognition and Concept Development
- Motor and O&M Skill Development
- Preschoolers with Additional Impairments, Assistive Technology
- Assessment Tools and Strategies for Preschool Vision
- Person Centered Planning and Activity Based IEP's
- Future Planning and Transition to Elementary School

↓

Instructor Sends Final Grade Sheet and Certificate to Participants

↓

Continuation of Learning

- networking among course participants
- workshops on topics of interest to participants offered by state 6-12 months later
- VIISA related sessions at SKI-HI/AAHBEI sponsored regional workshops in the southeast, west, and central states
- updates and new ideas through VIISA newsletters for instructors, participants, etc.
- technical assistance conference calls sponsored by VIISA with state contacts
- national listserve and webCT site for state instructor
- VIISA information on SKI-HI Website: www.skihi.org

Costs to the Project and the States. Project VIISA covers most of the cost of the national instructors' time and travel expenses. States in turn are responsible for all the costs at their end (e.g., time, travel and materials for their state instructors, administration, onsite class and facility expenses, training media and materials). Costs to course participants varies, depending on the level of financial assistance from their local programs and the state (e.g., purchase of the text and homestudy manual, travel/lodging/meals for onsite classes, credit, etc.).

III. Logistical Problems and How They Were Solved

Working with two rather than three new states per year. Early in the grant period, the project staff became aware of additional needs of new states as well as those already implementing the inservice model. Project staff felt that it was more important to help a few new states and ongoing states become stronger implementation sites, so the decision was made to work with just two new states each year rather than three. This enabled project staff to provide more support to new training teams by going back after their first course to provide follow-up training and to assist them onsite in planning for the next course. It also enabled the project to provide more technical assistance to states already implementing (e.g., conference calls with state contacts twice a year, onsite updates and training with state training teams, additional resource materials, piloting a new mentor piece). The new states worked with over the three years were: WA, IL, AZ, MI, NM, OK.

Mentoring. A common theme that came from participants' course evaluations related to the desire to work more closely with a trained vision professional as they were first learning how to serve young children with blindness and vision impairments. Even though they learned a great deal in the course and felt it helped them better work with these children, sometimes knowing how to apply and adapt the information to specific children was a struggle due to their lack of experience with this population. Throughout the courses, instructors encourage participants to work in teams and use each other as a resource.

In an attempt to better meet this need, the project piloted a limited mentoring piece with the training taking place in Massachusetts in the fall of 1999. Several course participants in this state

were each mentored by a state instructor for a year. This mentoring consisted of activities such as: phone consultation on specific assignments the course participant was carrying out with a child; shadowing the mentor on their job; having the mentor come onsite to observe and give feedback to the participant; having the mentor assist them in conducting an assessment of a child; etc. Both the mentors and course participants involved set goals and activities for the mentorship program at the beginning of the VIISA training. These goals and activities were reviewed quarterly with progress noted on them. It was hoped that this added support could be one way to help a small number of VIISA course participants gain even more skills in working with young children who are blind and visually impaired. The three instructor/mentors were paid by the project for their time in doing this additional work.

The results were very positive. Mentees expressed great appreciation for the added support and expressed that the skills and knowledge they gained as a result of the mentoring surpassed what they would have gained from the course alone. It helped them apply in greater depth what they were learning in the course. Likewise, the mentors gained a great deal of personal and professional satisfaction in seeing the growth in the skills and understanding their mentees gained in working with the child(ren) on their caseload who was blind or visually impaired.

In looking at the future role of mentoring with VIISA courses, it is not practical to think that all course participants will be able to benefit from this piece. There are a limited number of preschool vision professionals, and usually the state instructors are the best qualified pool of mentees in the state. Their workloads are already heavy. At best, the state instructors who have a desire and time to do it expressed that they could only mentor one or two participants. In addition, the funds to pay for mentoring in many of the VIISA sites is limited. Therefore, when this piece is added, a small number of course participants who will benefit from the added support must carefully be selected. Their selection must be based in part on need as well as the number of children on their caseloads that would benefit from their new skills. Also, location (whether isolated from vision expertise) and whether they will be continuing in their work with young children with vision impairment for a few years are also key factors in selection.

Because of the potential benefits of the mentoring piece, the VIISA project added this piece

to its new OSEP grant application for 2000-2003. In the new grant, one state per year will be selected to be assisted by VIISA in getting the mentoring piece in place. It is hoped that they will be able to find long term funding to continue with it on into future trainings.

IV. Impact

State of the Art Materials. The VIISA Project has developed and produced a variety of materials for use in training early intervention/childhood professionals in working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are blind and visually impaired and their families. These materials have been developed, published, and distributed by the VIISA Project at the SKI•HI Institute and HOPE, Inc. in Logan, Utah. These materials are listed and described in Appendix I.

In particular during this grant period, the following new materials were developed and distributed to sites: Five new training videos, a manual with writeups on the most common eye conditions in the preschool population that result in vision loss, and a booklet in both English and Spanish on materials (books, videos, articles) available in Spanish for families of young children who are blind and visually impaired.

The VIISA project is a growing, changing model that is concerned with services to families of young children with blindness and visual impairment. A constant effort is maintained to ensure that the model represents the latest research and best practice in the field. For this reason, throughout the three year grant period, all training materials, procedures and manuals were updated. And, in the participant homestudy manuals, a rich array of articles from a variety of current journals in both the vision and early childhood field are provided. In many cases, copy-right fees were paid by the project to the publishers to make these articles available to course participants and state instructors.

In addition to the publications listed above, project VIISA contributes to the SKI•HI Institute newsletter that goes out to 4,500 VIISA, INSITE, and SKI•HI users throughout the country three times a year at no cost to these individuals and agencies. (See Appendix 2)

VIISA also contributes to the biannual "Trainer's Tidings" that is mailed to all local and national VIISA, INSITE, and SKI•HI trainers/instructors across the country who maintain current

trainer/instructor certificates issued by the projects after they are trained. These are renewed every five years. (See Appendix 2)

Finally, the project maintains an up-to-date training kit of toys, materials, resource books, videos, etc. for use at onsite classes. New implementation states are able to check these out for use in their first course series. Over time, states are able to put their own training kits together, no longer needing to use the projects. These training materials are in constant use.

VIISA Training Activities. Data kept at the project office provide the information needed for the VIISA fact sheet found below. These reflect the impact VIISA has had over the last three years. Summary of Impact of VIISA Activities of 1997-2000

		National
Dissemination of information to state agencies		150
Number of VIISA courses, Infant/Toddler, taught in states		40
Number of VIISA courses, Preschoolers, taught in states		20
Number of participants completing Course #1		635
Number of participants completing Course #2		330
Number of Children estimated to benefit from training participants received from the VIISA courses		2,900
Consultative assistance to sites:	Onsite TA	14
	Phone, Information	numerous
Instructor workshops to certify new state trainers		8
Number of new state instructors certified and receiving training materials		65
National staff meetings for update, retraining, and revision of training packages		1
Number of national VIISA instructors (this includes the director)		6
Number of regional and national conferences VIISA presented at		3

V. Evaluation Findings

VIISA Outreach collects evaluation data as it relates to the courses being offered, the instructors, participants, and effectiveness of the outreach process. These are compiled and summarized with recommendations made by the evaluator. These data assist the project in making adjustments and improvements to procedures and materials. This evaluation information and data are described in the pages that follow. (See Appendix 3 for overview of evaluation design)

Support from VIISA Project and Implementation in the State. State contacts, national instructors, and state instructors that returned surveys were appreciative of the support that they received from the VIISA Project. State contacts also stressed the importance of regular contact between the state training team and their national instructor. The 12 State Contacts who have participated in the two Technical Assistance Conference calls during the past year initiated and paid for by the VIISA Project have found this new activity to be very helpful. Common issues of concern to states are first identified in a survey before the call, then discussed in the call. States are able to share with each other how they are handling these, get ideas from one another and do some problem solving around the issues. Detailed notes from these calls are summarized and sent to all VIISA state contacts. Some of the areas that have been discussed include: arranging for college/CEU credits; recruiting course participants; managing the training packages; funding; providing follow-up to training; use of parents in all aspects of the inservice model; and evaluation.

State instructors valued highly having the national instructor mentor them through their first course series. They really enjoy the newsletter "Trainer Tidings", the wealth of information available to them in the Instructor Manuals and have found the information and techniques on working with adult learners invaluable. They appreciate working in teams so that the amount of content they are responsible for teaching is smaller at first and they have the chance to learn from each other. Many state instructors stated that they have used the training skills and material learned from VIISA to conduct other training activities in their state and local programs. When asked about the impact VIISA training has had on their state common themes were: increased referrals in their local programs of young children who are blind and visually impaired; these

children are receiving better services; increased collaboration on teams around these children; and staff are better aware of the needs of this population, resources, materials, adaptive strategies.

There are a lot of pieces for the state VIISA contact to coordinate. It is critical that states give their state contact enough time to do this job. For those that do, things run well. For those that don't, keeping all the pieces organized and working well can be a big challenge. It is critical that the state task force have representatives from various agencies who support the inservice model with time and money and that this group meets at least once a year. They need to have a plan for implementation backed up by a budget.

Some of the state contacts suggested that more follow-up training sessions would be helpful for their state instructors and course participants. This is something the project has encouraged states to do and has offered help in doing through technical assistance, but only a few states have taken the project up on the offer each year. A few states have also offered follow-up sessions for course participants a year or two later. These have been well received and attended. Likewise, some states have taken advantage of sessions for training participants and state instructors provided at SKI-HI/AAHBEI regional conferences in both the southeast and southwest.

State contacts also saw a need to have even more state instructors trained. So, two regional instructor training sessions were offered in June, 2000 to help meet this need. Six states sent 40 new instructors to these training sessions.

Some state contacts expressed the need for state instructors who would have more time to commit to the inservice training. On the other hand, many state instructors are training on release time or getting little or no pay. This does not appear to work well. The most satisfied instructors are in the states that have worked out adequate pay for their time. Their longevity is better and they are more willing to give of their time when rewarded and supported in their learning and work.

Some of the state contacts and state instructors expressed a concern about how best to recruit course participants so that the right audience comes to the training. This was a topic of discussion in the January 2000 technical assistance conference call with contacts from nine states who participated. The recommendations that came from this discussion were disseminated to all state contacts for VIISA.

Several of the state instructors wished that they could have had the materials further ahead before their own training began to begin to look them over. Some of them also felt they could have used more training time and practice before helping to conduct their first course. They would have liked to see more examples of how others train or present a particular topic. Many stressed how important careful planning ahead of time with other members of the team is. Some states bring the team together for a day, months ahead to do planning; others do it by conference call; and those with limited funds do the best they can via e-mail, mail and phone. Many of the state instructors also expressed the need for ongoing support through additional training, access to new materials and information, and opportunities to talk with other instructors. Some interest has been expressed in having the VIISA Project start a national Listserv for state instructors as a way for them to share ideas across state lines and programs, problem solve, etc. In fall of 2000, the project got both an e-group and webCT site up and running for the network of state instructors nationwide. Monthly chat sessions along with other useful information will be offered on the site.

Revisions were made to the surveys filled out by both the state contacts and instructors in Fall of 1999. As a part of this, the State Contacts and State Instructors were asked to rate the training materials on a scale from 1 = low to 5 = high.

Item	Instructors n	Instructors Mean score	Task Force n	Task Force Mean score
Course materials			6	4.2
Your instructor manuals for the course	22	4.6		

State instructors were very pleased at what a good collection of resources the materials were. They commented on the usefulness of the following aspects of the content in both the materials and the training they went through: adult learning skills, learning styles, and hands on experiences (e.g. the mini-presentations they made using the material).

The state contacts and instructors were also asked to rate the support they received on a scale from 1 = low to 5 = high from the national VIISA Project in Utah. They were also asked to use

the same scale to rate how various aspects of the inservice model are being implemented within their state. The following table reports the responses to those questions. There were a few differences in questions asked of the state contacts and those asked of the state instructors. This is the reason for blanks in some of the columns.

	Instructors		State Contact	
Item	**n**	**Mean score**	**n**	**Mean score**
Support from VIISA Project:				
Support/coordination with project office in Utah			8	4.5
News from project (SKI-HI News, Trainer Tidings, website)	23	4.6	8	4.2
Technical assistance from project			8	4.4
Support/feedback from the national VIISA instructor	23	4.5	8	4.9
Evaluation procedures/forms			7	4.1
How things are working within the State:				
Coordination with other agencies in state			8	3.9
Planning and coordination with the other state instructors	19	4.2		
Planning/coordinating with state training team; size of team			8	4.1
The selection of course participants, registration for the course	23	4.0	8	4.4
Selection, training, funding of state instructors			8	4.1
Funding for courses, materials, and participant expenses			7	4.6
Accessibility of training materials/Obtaining, managing training package	23	4.3	6	3.8
The onsite workshop and facility arrangements	22	4.4		
Arranging for college and/or CEU credit			7	4.6
Providing follow-up to training for state team and participants			7	3.4

Demographics on Course Participants. Demographic information about the course participants was collected. The table on the next page lists the percentages of students for each of the demographic categories. The VIISA course participants usually hold a bachelor's or master's degree, come from a variety of specialties (e.g., special education, vision, early childhood) and work in rural and urban communities with primarily children birth to age five. Their average amount of teaching experience is 11 years.

Percentages of Participants in VIISA Courses for Each Demographic Variable

Characteristic	Percentage 1998-2000	1994-97	1991-94
Educational Level			
BS or BA	38	48	52
MS or MA	50	39	43
Ph.D. or Ed.D.	1	0	0
Other (Paras, High School, MSW)	11	12	5
Area of Specialization			
Visual Impairment	17	26	14
Special Education	29	35	11
Speech and Hearing	4	5	7
Other (e.g., EI, EC, OT, PT, Nursing)	63	33	57
Area of Disability Taught			
Visual Impairment	40	34	22
Special Education	44	24	27
Multi-disabled	39	19	9
Other (Behavioral, Hearing, Parent Education)	29	23	42
Geographic Area Where Teach			
Urban	30	24	15
Inner City	12	9	0
Rural	50	40	40
Suburban	29	23	15
Other (statewide, regional, small city)	3.5	4	30
Level of Teaching			
Birth to 3	54	37	17
3-5	46	29	17
Elementary	22	15	4
Other (Birth-21, Adults, Administration, Therapists)	11	19	62

Note: Several of the items may add up to more than 100% because of several roles.

Course Materials. The participants were asked to rate the texts on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being low to 5 being high. For 1998-2000, the mean rating was 4.7, for 1994-97 it was 4.5 and for 1991-94 it was 4.5. Positive comments were about the wealth of information provided and its usability with the children and families they serve.

Course Design. Participants were asked about the course design and components. The table below reports their responses. Most prefer the complete inservice plan to any one single component (in other words, they like the combination of homestudy, onsite classes, and practicum assignments).

Percentages of Participants Responses to Questions about the VIISA Course Design

Question	Yes 98-00/94-97/ 91-94	No 98-00/94-97/ 91-94
Did the course meet expectations?	98/95/97	2/5/3
Did you like the delivery plan?	93/93/82	6/7/18
Would you prefer all onsite?	35/32/30	65/68/70
Would you prefer all home study?	10/7/12	90/93/88
Would you prefer all distance?	30/6/4	70/94/96

Rating of Course. Training participants were asked to rate the course. The table on the next page shows the percentages of their ratings. A large majority of the training participants consistently rate the course from 4 to 5 with five being the highest. Particularly high are the course content, materials, practicum, onsite classes and practical application of the training. When they were asked to rate the content on a scale from one being low to five being high, the mean for 1998-2000 was 4.7, for 1994-97 it was 4.3 and for 1991-94 it was 4.5.

Percentages of Participants' Rating of the VIISA Courses (1998-00/1994-97/1991-94)

Question (1 is low, 5 is high)	1	2	3	4	5
Practical Application					
	0	0/1/1	5/6/5	19/25/37	76/68/57
Onsite classes	0	0/2/1	7/8/7	26/36/24	66/55/68

Rating of Course Requirements. Participants were asked to rate the requirements of the course. These percentages are listed in the table below. The general theme was that the requirements for the courses were more than they expected, and in some cases too much (i.e., homestudy assignments). However, most stated that they learned a great deal from doing the assignments. Early in the project, portfolio assessment was used in the grading process. Participants did not see the value and few chose to redo assignments to better their score, so the portfolio piece was dropped.

Percentages of Participant Ratings of the Course Requirements (1998-00/1994-97/1991-94)

Item (1 low, 5 high)	1	2	3	4	5
Home Study Assignments	1/1/ 0	3/3/2	15/16/18	33/33/48	50/46/32
Practicum	0/2/0	0/2/0	4/5/13	31/22/39	65/66/48

There were specific things that the participants liked about the course overall: the opportunity for questions to be answered, mixing onsite and home study, learning from others, the variety of practical assignments to choose from, relevancy of course content to their work, and the varied learning experiences used in the onsite sessions. Many did express that it was a lot of information packed into a short amount of time.

Suggestions for improvement have included: obtaining the materials further ahead of time; making the homestudy manual less bulky; more time to complete assignments (average time is two weeks per assignment); and more help in finding children with whom to do the practicum assignments when participants have less access to a variety of children. Early in the project, some expressed that the onsite days were long for people used to actively working with children all day. But as the project began to include a variety of learning activities in the onsite sessions, this complaint became less common. Most states have used 2- 2 ½- day onsites spread out over time with 4-6 homestudy assignments (fewer assignments, longer onsites).

Many participants stated that they would have liked more information about the course up front so that they would have better known just how much time it was going to take. The VIISA trainings are courses offered for college credit and require a real commitment of time.

Rating of the State Instructors. Course participants were asked to rate specific attributes of the instructors on a five point scale with one being low and five being high. The table on the next page reports the percentages of participants rating the instructor at each level for each attribute for the time periods 1991-94, 1994-97 and 1998. During these time periods the majority of the participants rated the instructors highly in all attributes, between 4 and 5. The scores for 1991-94 are slightly higher. This was the demonstration period when national instructors were doing all the teaching and state training teams were not yet in place. Two items, varied learning activities and group process skills, were added to the evaluation form in 1994. That is why percentages for those two attributes lack a rating for 1991-94. For the 1999-2000 period, the mean scores in the categories listed below ranged from 4.7 to 4.9, again reflecting a high degree of satisfaction on the part of participants with their VIISA instructors.

The project was curious about the difference between courses taught by a smaller team of instructors versus a larger team. The data and comments indicate participants from courses taught by either team size were equally satisfied with their instructors. Feedback included comments like "I liked the variety of presenters and styles" and "presenters need to coordinate better to avoid repeat in content and learning activities."

Participants were also asked about the return of their assignments. An overwhelming majority (in 90th percentile in all time periods, 1991-2000) stated that their assignments were

returned to them in a timely fashion and that they appreciated the comments and suggestions provided by their instructor.

Percentages of Participants' Ratings of the VIISA Instructors (1998/1994-97/1991-94)

Item (1 is low, 5 is high)	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of the Subject	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/2/0	21/14/10	79/84/90
Preparedness	0/1/0	0/0/0	2/3/2	19/12/13	79/85/85
Use of Varied Learning Activities	0/1	0/1	1/4	33/23	66/71
Manner of Presentation	0/1/0	0/1/0	3/4/8	21/29/13	76/66/79
Clarity and Understanding	0/1/0	0/1/0	2/4/2	32/20/17	66/75/81
Group Process Skills	0/1	0/1	5/2	29/27	66/69
Ability to Encourage Participation	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/4/3	25/20/10	75/75/87
Responsiveness to Questions	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/1/2	21/18/8	79/80/90
Fairness	0/1/0	0/1/0	0/2/2	15/11/7	85/87/91

Facilities. Finally, participants were asked about facilities for the onsite sessions. The most important factor was the size of the meeting room. Adult learners like to spread out. Comfortable seats, room temperature, and acoustics were also important factors.

Follow-up Questionnaires. Near the end of each three year grant period, the project sends out a follow-up questionnaire to participants to find out how they had been using the training, and what their present needs were regarding the use of VIISA material.. A follow-up survey was sent to 125 course participants. Thirty returned the survey. Fifteen participants reported that they serve infants and/or preschoolers. The number of infants reportedly being served ranged from 1 to 50 with a mean of 13 and a total of 133. Of those infants 53% (range 3 to 27) were being served in the home and 47% (range 1 to 47) were being served in a center.

The number of preschoolers reportedly being served ranged from 1 to 11 with a mean of 4 and a total of 28. Of those preschoolers 7% (two serving 1 each) were being served in the home and 93% (range 1 to 10) were being served in a center.

The participants were asked to list the 3-5 most common eye conditions of the children. There were 19 conditions listed. Only three had more than two instances. Those three, in order of occurrence, were Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI), and Strabismus.

The participants were also asked to list the 3 most common additional disabilities of the children. There were 11 conditions listed. Four had more than two instances. Those four, in order of occurrence, were motor, cognitive, speech/ language delays, and cerebral palsy.

Participants were asked what kinds of things they were doing differently with children and families as a result of the VIISA training they had received. Some of the important responses were:

More attention to family input
Working more appropriately with visually impaired children, because of more information (e.g., using a more multisensory approach, making adaptations in materials and strategies, recognizing cues better, more aware of how vision is impacting other areas of learning)
Can provide more information to families and other team members
Can understand professional reports better
More resources (both print, in knowing other professionals such as O&M and Vision, other agencies in the state that can help)
More confidence

Participants were asked about the skills, materials, and information they have used most from their VIISA training. Some of the important responses were:

Resource manual
Information about visual impairments (common comment)
Information provided by other participants
Information about speech/language and feeding
Information on play skills
Use of the "Little Room" and Lilli Nielsen materials and strategies

Participants were asked what they found lacking and to suggest changes. Some of the important responses were:

Have materials before the course starts (the project recommends this, but not all states are good at doing it)
Knowledge of service options
Less compressed training, more onsite time
Use the resource manual more in the training
More time for networking
More demonstrations with children at the onsite classes

When asked about the kinds of follow-up to training they prefer, many selected "Sessions related to Preschool Blindness at existing Statewide Conference". Most selected "yearly" for frequency and noted that they would like to have opportunities to share ideas with each other, hear presentations on topics such as functional vision, cortical visual impairment, orientation and mobility, etc. Many also expressed an interest in participating in regional conferences. Most also expressed appreciation for their state's support in purchasing the VIISA resource manuals, helping them with travel costs and the opportunity to receive college credit for the training.

Overall Recommendations by Evaluator. Based on what was read in the surveys, the VIISA project evaluator made the following recommendations.

Provide larger classrooms. Adult learners like to spread out.
State instructors need more compensation, time, and support through follow-up activities.
Potential participants need to be more carefully and comprehensively recruited.
All state instructors either need to be networked better or have further contact with their national instructors after their first course.
Participants seem to be most appreciative of those resources that they can use now on the job with their families.
The materials need to be coded somehow and the bulkiness needs to be mitigated.
The participants would like to see more demonstrations of strategies with actual children at the onsite classes. They would like opportunities for follow-up.
State instructors need some way of either getting more early practice, or at least confidence that they are doing fine, and that they will improve over time.
Both instructors and participants would like to have their materials sooner.
The State Task force with representatives from multiple agencies in the state needs to stay more involved and supportive of the State Contact and help with the funding of the inservice model. The State Contact needs to be given adequate time to coordinate VIISA activities.

VI. Final Report on Objectives and Activities of the Project

The order in which some of the objectives are reported on has been changed. Each is still covered.

Objective #2:

To create appropriate public, professional, and agency awareness of the need for inservice training for professionals working with young children with blindness and visual impairment and of the training available through Project VIISA.

To promote awareness nationwide, the project has done the following over the three year grant period.

1. Mailed printed awareness material about VIISA to lead agencies (Part C, B, CSPD, Vision Services) in the states that have not implemented VIISA; then responded to requests for more information from these states by phone and mail (WA, ILL, AZ, MI, NM, OK, NE, GA, NH, MD, VA, CA).
2. Contributed to the SKI•HI Newsletter (including information about VIISA) which goes to 4,500 individuals and agencies across the country, three times a year..
3. Sent articles about VIISA to be included in two widely read quarterly newsletters on preschool vision that go nationwide. An article about the VIISA Project was published in Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness in Nov. 2000. (See Appendix 1)
4. VIISA staff have participated as presenters in two AAHBEI/SKI•HI regional conferences and one national AER conference, disseminating information about the project. These took place in: Phoenix, AZ, Jan. 2000; Atlanta, GA, June 2000; and Denver, CO, July 2000.
5. Has information about VIISA on the SKI•HI Institute website page.
6. The VIISA project also sends a summary of the evaluation data sent by sites over the three year grant period to all states replicating as well as other interested parties. This evaluation data is also included in the more detailed Project Overview that is mailed to individuals and state agencies that request more information on the project.

Objectives #1, 3, & 4:

To coordinate awareness, needs assessment, resource commitment, and replication activities with state lead agency for part C, Part B, and CSPD of IDEA, and vision preschool services in the state.

To provide training to replication agency personnel for implementing the VIISA inservice training model, and to prepare and equip local instructors in order to ensure continuity of the VIISA training.

To enhance the capacity of agencies to continue providing quality inservice training by conducting follow-up and technical assistance activities.

Assisting New Sates to Implement VIISA Training

Over the three year grant, the project worked with the following new states to put the inservice model into place: WA, ILL, AZ, MI, NM, OK. In each state, a task force with representatives from lead agencies was formed to plan and coordinate VIISA activities. An onsite preplanning meeting took place with each task force and was conducted by the national instructor assigned. The various lead agencies contributed funding for the training activities. These agencies coordinated their efforts in making the various local agencies they each worked with across the state aware of the VIISA training opportunities that would be coming up. The national instructor conducted a three-day onsite training session for the state team in all six of the states.

In four of the states the training teams were made up of a combination of early childhood, early intervention and vision professionals from a variety of agencies across the state. In two of the states, the state instructors worked for a large statewide program serving children with blindness and visual impairments. In all of the states, course participants came from a wide variety of early intervention/childhood programs. These were individuals who had need for the training and who were working with young blind and visually impaired children in their local programs. In each state, onsite classes were offered at a location central to where most of the participants worked. The national VIISA instructor worked closely with the state contact (representing the task force) and training team in planning and teaching their first course series. In five of the states, the national instructor also went onsite between courses for a meeting with the state contact and instructors. Together they reflected on how the first course went, discussed

implications for changes the next time that course would be taught, then made specific plans for the second course.

Follow-Up to States

Following the teaching of the second course, the national instructor discussed follow-up activities with the state team and state contact. These were also shared with the project director. Once a state has completed its first course series, they basically have a system in place for continuing to offer the trainings as needed. However, the VIISA Outreach project continues to keep in touch with each state in a variety of ways to support their implementation. These include:

1. Mailings with update information to state contacts and training teams several times a year. Newsletters.
2. A phone call from the project director to each state contact in the fall, winter, and spring to discuss how VIISA training activities are taking place, technical assistance needs and opportunities, and reminders to send training information to the project office for data and evaluation purposes (e.g., participant lists, evaluations, agendas).
3. The national trainer is still available by phone and mail to the state contact and training team for consultation on trainings. Often times, state instructors feel quite comfortable in calling their national instructor for advice and ideas. They also call the project office for loaner training materials or with additional questions.
4. Twice a year, the project offered a conference call to state contacts to discuss issues of concern and need to them. The average number of state contacts that participated in each call were 9. Notes from each call were mailed to those who were unable to be on the call.

At the end of the three year grant period, the project sent out a follow-up questionnaire to all training participants in the implementing states. These were reviewed, summarized, results shared with states and recommendations discussed. The project explores with the state contact ways to address the concerns expressed, offering TA as appropriate to support such efforts. In

the end, each state, though, chooses what they will do. Some provide follow-up activities; others do not. These follow-up activities have included the following:

1. Offering workshops on topics of continued concern to VIISA course participants at an already existing conference: at both regional AAHBEI conferences
2. Offering a follow-up session to VIISA training participants a year or so after training. This was done in two states.
3. Offering follow-up training to state instructors with the help of the national VIISA instructor. This was done in five states.
4. Two states have used members of their state training team to provide some onsite TA to training participants in their local regions. Many informal support networks have formed between course participants working in programs close to each other. For example, a vision consultant may form a closer working relationship with the EI or EC teacher in his/her district that attended training with her. They may consult with each other on young VI children they are working with. These are not always children then have in common either.

Staff Development

The national instructors came to Utah in fall of 1997 to plan together for the new outreach grant (1997-2000) and discuss revisions/updates to training manuals and procedures. National consultants on adult learning and evaluation have provided training to project staff over the three years. The national VIISA instructors returned to Utah in Sept. 2000 for 1) a staff meeting, 2) to plan for future VIISA activities, and 3) to discuss changes to procedures for working with states. The project director held quarterly conference calls with them over the grant period. Staff members have communicated regularly by phone, mail, and e-mail as well.

Records

The Project director, evaluator, secretary, and disseminator have maintained files on all the states being worked with as well as various aspects of VIISA project activities.

Objective #5:

To develop and disseminate resource, training, and awareness materials for early intervention/early childhood and vision programs and professionals.

The VIISA Project has developed and produced a variety of materials for use in training professionals who work with infants and young children who are blind and visually impaired and their families. These materials have been developed by the VIISA Project at the SKI•HI Institute. Some are distributed to states by the project; others are published and sold through a private company, HOPE, Inc., Logan, UT. Information on these materials is provided in the Institute newsletter, Trainer's Tidings, the HOPE catalog and on our web site page.

Each replicating state obtains a complimentary set of materials for the VIISA training package and for use by the person and agency coordinating the training efforts as well as by the state instructors. This training package set includes the following items for **both** the VIISA infant/toddler and the preschool courses:

Management Manual for the Task Force and State Contact
Introduction to Instructor's Manual
The trainer's manual with white copies of transparencies
The master of the home study manuals in print and on disk
Some videos and slides to use in training
A copy of the two-volume, 1,200 page text for the class
A master set of the handouts used in the onsite classes

Additional copies of these materials are purchased by the states.

Below is a chronology of materials developed, updated, and revised over the past three year grant period (also see Appendix 1 for detailed descriptions of each).

1997-98

Updating of the following manuals: *VIISA Management Manual, Introductory Manual for State Instructors. Instructor Manuals for both courses, Homestudy Manuals for both courses, and the Manual for Training State Instructors.*

The Project developed the following for use in the VIISA classes:

For the Infant Class: *Arena Assessment of Logan (25 min), Some Examples of Lilli Nielsen's Active Learning Materials and Strategies (45 min), Infants Using Vision In Sample Daily Routines at Home (60 min)*

For the Preschool Class: *Vision Assessment in the Preschool Class (40 min), Preschoolers with Vision Impairments in Various Classroom Settings (60 min), Experiences with Stories and Books (30 min)*

1999-2000

The project in collaboration with the Hilton-Perkins Grant put together the following booklet: *Materials in Spanish for Families of Young Children Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired.* This booklet gives titles, descriptions, sources and prices of booklets, videos and articles available for families of young children who are blind and visually impaired in both English and Spanish. VIISA distributed complimentary copies to implementation sites. It is now available for sale as a fundraiser for Division 8 of AER, the infant/preschool division of this national organization of teachers of the blind and visually impaired.

Objective #6:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the outreach process and to evaluate the effect of the VIISA training on personnel and its impact on the services they provide to children with blindness and visual impairment and their families.

Appendix 3 shows a diagram and provides information on the evaluation procedures used by the project. The forms and procedures went through some major revisions during this three year grant.

The project director works with the national instructors and state contacts by phone and mail to obtain these various pieces. They are given to the evaluator to enter and summarize. The evaluator meets with the director to discuss results. These are then shared and discussed with both the state contacts and training teams. They are discussed with the national trainers on quarterly conference calls.

Starting in January 2000, the project began to pilot some methods for obtaining information from a small number of families and preschool programs that would provide data on the impact of VIISA training on the vision specific services they have been receiving from the VIISA course participants working with them. This data (e.g., intervention logs, pre/post ratings, phone interviews, child demographics/medical/developmental information) will be used to write case

studies that describe the impact VIISA has had on the child and family and those who serve them.

Results of the data evaluation activities were reported earlier in this document.

VII. Future Activities

Training, Impact on Professionals, Programs, and Families, Assistance to Sites

Project VIISA wrote a grant application for a new three-year period (2000-2003) through OSEP-EEPCD. VIISA has been funded to continue as an Outreach project with new states and programs around the country as well as to provide technical assistance to states already implementing. This will enable the project to develop new training and curricular material as needed. Through this new VIISA Outreach grant, the following impact would be expected.

1. Two VIISA courses would be conducted each year in a new state. Thirteen courses will be conducted each year in ongoing states. This will make a total of 15 courses per year for a total of 45 courses over the years. This will result in around 900 individuals receiving training who will in turn impact the lives of around 3000 children and families.
2. VIISA will continue to grow and expand in the 21 states where the model has been implemented.. The project's impact will begin to develop in three new states (e.g., NE, GA, VA).
3. These new states will be provided with the VIISA training package and assisted in implementing the VIISA inservice training model.
4. Around 75 new state instructors will be trained through five state instructor training workshops.
5. Two new parent consultants will be added to the project staff.
6. The Project will participate in regional workshops in 2-3 locations around the country.
7. One state per year will be assisted in adding a mentoring piece to their training.
8. State trainers will network, share ideas, take part in chat sessions with other trainers across the country through the Project's new WebCT site and e-group.

9. Technical assistance will continue to be provided to the states now implementing. New state instructors as needed will be trained to add to their state training teams. These will be needed to replace state instructors who move or change jobs.
10. Two conference calls a year will be offered to state contacts to discuss issues of concern and share ideas that will help strengthen their implementations.
11. Together with sites, the project will explore ways to incorporate the use of more technology in the training format (e.g., e-groups, chats, material on line for course participants).
12. More useful evaluation data will be collected and shared with sites to assist them in obtaining funding and support for this ongoing training in their state.

New Products and Materials

Through this new grant, the following materials would be developed for VIISA users in the field.

1. Updated course manuals, video clips, and home study manuals for use in VIISA courses.
2. Updated management manuals for state task forces.
3. Three yearly newsletters mailed to 3,000 professionals in the VIISA/SKI•HI/INSITE network.
4. Two yearly "Trainers' Tidings" to go out to all national and local trainers and instructors.
5. Some new training packages that state teams can use for more in depth one day follow-up workshops on "hot topics" in the preschool vision field (e.g., on early literacy, vision medical issues, etc.)
6. Update information for instructors and trainees on research and best practice approaches to use with this population of young children with blindness and visual impairment.

VII. Assurance Statement

VIISA confirms that the full text of this report is being sent to ERIC and that copies of the title page, overview, and summary have been sent to the others addressed on the attached sheet.

VIISA Training Activities in States, Fall 1994-Spring 2000

* **Note:** number in parentheses next to each state indicates technical assistance provided by project over the past 5 years.

Outreach States

States	# of State Instructors, Date Trained	Infant Class			Preschool Class		
		#, When	Infant Class # Participants	# Children VI served	#, When	Preschool Class # Participants	# Children VI served
Year 1: 1994-95							
West Virginia (1) Lois Hammett	3 trained in 1995	1, Fall '95 1, Summer'97	16 19	41 50	1, Spring, '96	15	45
Tennessee (1) Lois Hammett	3 trained in 1994	1, Fall '94 1, Winter '95 1, Spring '96 1, Summer'96 1, Winter, '97 1, Summer'97 1, Summer'98	13 13 26 5 18 5 23	36 35 60 15 50 15 50			
Pennsylvania (2) Sheri Moore	18 trained in 1995 5 trained in 1996	1, Fall '95-E 1, Fall '95-W 1, Fall, '96-E 1, Fall '96-W 1, Spring'98-E	34 25 9 12 11	60 60 25 36 33	1, Spring '96-W 1, Spring '96-E 1, Spring '97-E 1, Spring '97-W 1, Spring '98-E	16 15 15 15 11	45 45 45 45 30
Year 2: 1995-96							
Wisconsin (2) Debbie Gleason	11 trained in 1996 2 more to be trained June 2000	1, Summer'96 1, Fall '99	25 23	60 60	1, Fall'96 1, Winter 2000	22 15	65 30
Kansas (2) Irene Topor	15 trained in 1996	1, Spring'97 1, Spring '99	14 15	45 45	1, Fall'96 1, Spring '98 1, Winter 2000	20 12 15	60 36 30
Utah (1) Elizabeth Morgan	5 trained in 1996	1, Spring '96 1, Spring 2000	24 23	50 50	1, Summer '97	15	50
Year 3: 1996-97							
Texas (1) Tanni Anthony	13 trained in 1997 6 more in 1998	1, Spring '97 1, Fall '97 1, Winter '98 1, Fall '98 1, Winter '99	16 20 22 20 20	50 60 66 60 60			
Rhode Island (2) Debbie Gleason	8 trained in 1997 more to be trained June 2000	1, Fall '97 1, Fall '99	10 9	30 40	1, Fall '98	12	48
Massachusetts (2) Debbie Gleason	6 trained in 1997 more to be trained June 2000	1, Fall '97 1, Fall '99	10 14	20 50	1, Fall '98	14	45
Year 4: 1997-98							
Washington Tanni Anthony	16 trained in 1998	1, Fall '99	15	30	Planned for Summer 2000		
Illinois (2) Lois Hammett	6 trained in Feb 1999; 8 more to be trained in June 2000	1, Fall '98 1, Fall '99 1, Winter 2000 1, Spring 2000	21 10 18 27	70 35 40 55			
Arizona Irene Topor	16 trained in 1998	1, Spring '98	23	69	1, Winter '99	25	75

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States Year 5: 1998-99	#State Instruct. Date trained	Infant # When	# Participants	#Children VI Served	Preschool #, When	# Participants	# Children VI Served
Michigan Debbie Gleason	12 trained in March '99	1, Fall '99	12	40	Planned for Fall 2000		
New Mexico Sheri Moore	10 trained Fall 1	1, Winter '99	25	50	1, Fall '99	20	75
Oklahoma (1) Irene Topor	12 trained May '99	1, Winter 2000	15	45	1, Fall '99	15	45
1991-94 Model Inservice States							
Florida (3)	6 trained in 1994	1, Winter '96 1, Winter '98 1, Winter 2000	47 13 15	75 50 30	1, Winter '97 1, Winter '99	18 13	75 35
Iowa (3)	4 trained in 1994 4 trained in 1999	1, Fall '96 1, Fall '97	15 15	34 30	1, Spring '96 1, Summer '98	17 15	42 30
Louisiana (2)	7 trained in 1994	1, Spring '95 1, Spring '96	22 12	40 20	1, Summer '96	31	60
Missouri	5 trained in 1994	1, Spring '95 1, Spring '99 1, Winter 2000	13 10 10	25 20 25			
Ohio (3)	7 trained in 1994	1, Spring '97 1, Fall '96 1, Winter '99 1, Winter 2000	8 10 20 15	16 20 40 30	1, Spring '97 1, Fall '98	10 20	13 40
South Carolina (2)	4 trained in 1994	1, Fall '95 1, Winter 2000	9 8	20 30	1, Fall '95 1, Winter 2000	10 8	25 30
Colorado	1 trained in 1994	1, Winter '95	8	20	1, Fall '94	10	20
TOTALS: 22 states (30)	**213 instructors**	**55 courses**	**910 participants**	**2271 children**	**27 courses**	**424 participants**	**1184 children**
OVERALL: 82 courses, 1334 people trained, 3455 children benefitted							

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What the Users Have to Say.....

"While the trainings were only one step, they provided new opportunities for collaboration between early childhood and vision service providers and a better knowledge base for mutual support for future endeavors...In a time when there is a severe national shortage of trained teachers of children with visual impairments, with many trained vision service providers lacking specialized training for infant/preschool service delivery, the VIISA model can be an important supplement to state efforts, especially if it is carefully planned to address particular state concerns and needs."

Colorado State Department of Education

* "I have more resources available to me on vision impairment to share with families–handouts, diagrams, activities/strategies for intervention."
* "I am more aware of the developmental patterns of young children with vision loss, how to better meet their needs and make adaptations."
* "I am more focused on parents, and working more closely with them."
* "I use a wider variety of sensory materials/experiences with these children."
* "I know about other people and agencies who serve these children and how they can be of help to me."

Various Participants

"VIISA deals with disability-specific developmental information that has been compiled from diverse and extensive sources. Information from how to potty-train a child with a visual impairment to how to help a child develop visual and tactual discrimination skills for reading readiness is covered in the VIISA texts, as well as so much more. Our state has at least 50 interventionists, preschool teachers, teachers of the visually impaired, etc., who have been trained through VIISA."

"A great strength of VIISA is the combination of reading and on-site instruction with actual time spent applying the material with infants and children. Not only does the VIISA participant learn more, but the child and his/her family receives an improved level of services."

Louisiana School for the Blind

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"VIISA has taught me more about vision impairment, gave me ideas to use with children and families, and gave me a network of professionals to call."

Participant

"Your help in providing continued technical assistance to our outreach program has been invaluable in providing us with up-to-date revisions and current best practice research and strategies. Also, your materials and newsletters have strengthened networking and benchmarking with other states who use the VIISA model."

Missouri School for the Blind

"The materials are excellent and very well organized. It was possible to use the syllabus to gain approval for the course to be offered through a university program for graduate credit. I have been able to get all of my questions answered in a timely manner and any changes or updates in materials are sent immediately. Course evaluations indicate that the participants find the training to be very relevant to their jobs and needs."

South Carolina Department of Education

"Empowerment as a teacher of the visually impaired with restored enthusiasm was personally important to me. It has been so very long since I received valuable professional development in visual impairment at the preschool level."

Participant

I am writing this letter to let you know the positive impact that the VIISA Project has had on our state. We currently have six trainers involved in teaching the course state wide and have just completed teaching both courses. The response to the course was overwhelming! Without the support, resources and input from Utah State, we would be unable to teach professionals in the field of Early Childhood Education the impact of vision impairments and methods that are effective in working with those children and their families.

The most exciting part about this project for me has been the expansion of the variety of professionals that we have been able to reach with this information who otherwise would have no means of obtaining it. There were Early Childhood Special Educators, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Orientation/Mobility Specialists, Itinerant Vision Teachers, Speech and Language Pathologists and parents participating in the classes.

Iowa School for the Blind

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"VIISA has made a tremendous difference in the way I present my lessons...I have learned so much about visual impairment...I have learned to pick more appropriate materials..." "The fact that I have now had formal training in early childhood/visual impairment should help with my relationship with parents." "This course has provided so much information beneficial to me, individually, and as a professional in the vision field. I am grateful to have had the opportunity! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!"

Participant

"Early childhood professionals who are adequately prepared to work with young children with visual impairments or blindness,, birth to five, and their families are rare. To my knowledge this is the only inservice program which prepares these valuable processionals to work as team members with this age child and disability, as well as their families."

Rhode Island State Department of Health

"The VIISA Model provides a rich source of information for meeting the developmental needs of the child and family where vision is a concern. It is a cost effective, inclusionary, and quality program that can be easily implemented in an existing system."

Participant

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1
Materials Developed by the Project
JVIB Article

Materials Already Developed by the VIISA Project And Updated on an Ongoing Basis

VIISA Resource Manual for Professionals Working With Young Children Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired and Their Families (1995)

This two-volume, 1060 page manual is the text for the two courses and provides a rich source of information for parents with accompanying visual, intervention strategies/activities/ materials for this population of children, birth through age five. Writers from the early childhood vision field from across the country contributed to this manual. HOPE distributes the manual nationwide.

Awareness Training Handbook (updated yearly)

This manual with handouts and transparencies is used by project staff to conduct the initial planning sessions with a state task force when they are preparing to implement the VIISA training model. It has also been used to conduct awareness sessions as needed.

Management Handbook for States (updated yearly)

This manual is designed for use by that state contact and task force for VIISA and is sent to them when their state decides to implement. It provides them with guidelines for implementation of the VIISA inservice delivery model. It contains sample forms that can be used along the way and an IBM disc copy of the forms so that they can be adapted to fit the state's needs.

Instructor Training Manual (updated yearly)

This contains the training guidesheets, transparencies and handouts used by the national VIISA Instructor when they conduct trainer training sessions in a state. A binder of research articles on working with adult learner and conducting trainings has also been assembled and is used at the actual training session.

Introductory Manual for State Instructors (updated yearly)

This manual was designed for use by the state training teams and contains the following: 1) an overview and history of the VIISA inservice model; 2) information on working with adult learners; 3) requirements and roles of a VIISA instructor and working with others on the training team; 4) training tips and ideas; 5) planning for, recruiting course participants and conducting VIISA courses; 6) copies of sample forms, letters, resource materials to use along the way; 7) directions on how to grade and give feedback on homestudy assignments along with sample assignments from poor to good; 8) and evaluation

procedures with forms to use each step of the way (evaluation forms for state contact, state instructors, course participants, families, mentors and mentees, etc.) A complimentary copy is given to each state. Additional copies are purchased from the project at just the cost of production.

Instructor Manual and Homestudy Manual for Course One (updated yearly)

The *Instructor Manual* is a large binder containing the training package for the Infant/ Toddler VIISA Course. It includes: 1) the training guidelines, 2) white copies of all transparencies, 3) copies of all handouts, 4) a listing of media and materials needed, 5) and additional resource information for the instructor. A complimentary copy is given to each state. Additional copies are purchased from the project at just the cost of production.

The *Homestudy Manual* is designed for the course participants and gives guidelines and procedures for completing homestudy assignments. It provides information on how they are graded, when each is due, etc. It also contains all the homestudy units with the assignment choices, pages to read in the text and additional articles for each topic. States are given a master of this to make copies for participants from.

Instructor Manual and Homestudy Manual for Course Two (updated yearly)

These manuals are similar to the ones described above, but all the content and information relates to working with preschoolers who are blind and visually impaired in center-based preschool settings for 3-5 year old.

Special Binders Used at Onsite Classes

The project has assembled two special binders. The first is a *Binder of Developmental Assessment Tools* containing examples of standardized, criterion referenced and curriculum based tools commonly used with young children who are blind and visually impaired. This binder is made available for review at the second onsite of each course when the topic of assessment comes up. A complete listing of the tools, descriptions and sources is provided as a handout to the participants.

The second is a *Binder of Functional Vision Assessment Tools* containing examples of various tools and checklists used to assess vision in young children. Some contain accompanying vision curricula. Participants are provided with a complete listing of these tools and their sources as well. It is used in the first onsite of each course when vision assessment is discussed.

Monograph on Eye Conditions (added to on a yearly basis)

This printed monograph contains reports on over 100 eye disorders (and syndromes which include vision problems) found in the preschool population. Each report discusses medical aspects and treatment of the eye disorder; implications for functioning and learning; suggestions for adaptations needed; and references for further reading. It's purpose is to be a resource to programs and something they can add to over time. A complimentary copy is given to each state. Additional copies are purchased from the project at just the cost of production.

Set of Slides for Training

This is a set of slides showing some of the specialized preschool learning materials (e.g., manipulatives, vision materials, braille materials) available from the American Printing House for the Blind which participants can access through their local vision consultant. Other slides in the set show samples of early literacy materials, low vision aids and use of contrast. A complimentary set is provided to each state for use in their training sessions as a part of the training package for VIISA.

Videos

The Project has developed the following videos for use in the VIISA classes.

For the Infant Class:

1. *Arena Assessment of Logan (25 min)*- Contains a series of clips of an arena assessment of a toddler who is totally blind conducted by an early intervention team at Perkins. It is for use in the Infant Course.
2. *Some Examples of Lilli Nielsen's Active Learning Materials and Strategies (45 min)*- Contains clips such as offering toys at the mouth for play; use of pegboards with toys attached; use of playbibs and vests; attaching toys into the hand; play with sets of comparables; playing with a child; a child playing in a home-made little room. It is for use in the Infant Course.
3. *Infants Using Vision In Sample Daily Routines at Home (60 min)*- Clips of three different infants with severe vision impairment engaged in routines at home such as feeding, playing, dressing and exploring. It is used in the class to help teach observation of functional vision skills in infants and toddlers.

For the Preschool Class:

1. *Vision Assessment in the Preschool Class (40 min)*- Contains clips of a preschooler with low vision engaged in various routine activities in a Headstart Preschool class; clips of formal vision assessment tools and strategies being used to assess vision in that setting; and clips of some adaptations being used with the little girl to make "seeing" more functional in that setting. This tape is designed for use in the Preschool Course.
2. *Preschoolers with Vision Impairments in Various Classroom Settings (60 min)*- This tape Is divided into five segments, each 10-15 minutes in length. In each segment a different child or group of children with vision loss are shown engaged in routine activities for that particular preschool class. One segment was filmed in the Perkins Preschool; another in a Utah School for the Blind Preschool Class; one in a Headstart Preschool; and one of a child who is blind in an integrated preschool class for children without disabilities. Any or all of the segments may be used in the Preschool Course.
3. *Experiences with Stories and Books (30 min)*- This tape contains: a discussion on appropriate adaptations for tactile books by Dr. Sally Mangold from a Pennsylvania teleconference on literacy; a clip of a storybag being used; a clip of a "big book" being used in a storytime; and a clip from Perkins of a storybox with actual objects and actions being used in a language activity/story of "The Three Little Pigs". It is for use in the preschool class.

A complimentary set of these videos is given to each state for use in their training sessions.

Booklet on Materials in Spanish for Families of Young Children Who Are Blind and Visually Impaired (in process)

This booklet gives titles, descriptions, sources and prices of booklets, videos and articles available for families of young children who are blind and visually impaired in Spanish. It is in both English and Spanish. The project was done in collaboration with the Hilton Perkins Grant that paid for the translation into Spanish. VIISA will distribute complimentary copies to implementation sites. The booklet is currently being used as a fundraiser for Division 8 of AER.

JVIB
Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness
November 2000 Volume 94 Number 11

ARTICLES

Literacy Ensuring High-Quality Instruction for Students in Braille Literacy Programs—Alan J. Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook

Early Intervention The VIISA Project: A Model National In-Service Training Program for Infants and Young Children with Visual Impairments—Elizabeth Morgan Dennison

Psychotherapy The Psychotherapeutic Use of Benign Hallucinations with Persons with Charles Bonnet Syndrome—Annie Wagner-Lampl and George Oliver

Research Notes Representation of Simple Graphs in Virtual Tactile Space—Harry J. Wyatt, Elaine C. Hall, and Kimberly Engber

Requests by Persons with Visual Impairments for Large-Print Accommodations—John Jay Frank

NEWS AND FEATURES

Editor's Page • From the Field • News • Calendar

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The VIISA Project: A Model National In-Service Training Program for Infants and Young Children with Visual Impairments

Elizabeth Morgan Dennison

Abstract: This article describes the results of the VIISA Outreach Project, a well-received in-service training model for personnel who work with infants and young children with visual impairments, which has been in existence since 1991 in 23 states.

Since more information is gained in a shorter time through vision than through any other sense, the presence of visual impairments (blindness or low vision) can significantly affect the development and learning of infants and young children. Many researchers have described the delays and other differences in the acquisition of motor, social, communication, play, cognitive, self-care, and hand skills that young children with visual impairments experience (Brambring, 1992; Deitz & Ferrell, 1993; Fraiberg, Smith, & Adelson, 1969; Hatton, Bailey, Burchinal, & Ferrell, 1997; Reynell, 1978; Warren, 1984). Most infants and young children with visual impairments have usable vision, and the best time for them to learn to use this vision is within the first five years of life when the brain is still developing (Hyvarinen, 1994).

The exact number of children from birth to age 5 with visual impairments is difficult to determine. However, information on the prevalence of visual impairments for this age group is available from two sources. According to the first source, the American Printing House for the Blind (APH, 2000), there were a total of 12,437 children who were legally blind, from birth through kindergarten, in the APH quota census of January 1999. This figure does not include the larger number of children with low vision who are served by programs that do not participate in the APH census, as well as the children with low vision or multiple disabilities who are not considered legally blind.

The second source is the 1994–95 Disability Supplement of the National Household Health Interview Survey. One question that was asked in the survey was, "Does anyone in your family have serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses or contact lenses? If yes, do you expect them to have this difficulty for at least the

This research on which this article was based was supported by Grant HO24D 70036-98 from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, and by Utah State University. The opinions expressed are those of the author, and no official endorsement by the Office of Special Education or the U.S. Department of Education should be inferred.

Accepted November 18, 1999.

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APPENDIX 2
Newsletters- SKI-HI and Trainer Tidings

THE SKI•HI INSTITUTE

December 2000

"Reaching [illegible] High"

Helping Children with Special Needs Achieve Their Highest Potential

Friends of SKI•HI Institute – First Meeting

May 20, 2000, was a milestone for the SKI•HI Institute. On that day, the first meeting of the Friends of SKI•HI Institute took place at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. In the morning, Friends and our Institute staff met in the conference room of the building which houses the Institute. The staff familiarized our Friends with the SKI•HI Institute of today - its programs and its aspirations. The whole group then brainstormed on areas in which the Institute might focus in the future. Ideas coalesced into four major areas: funding issues, marketing issues, materials issues, and new directions. A top priority was the need for the Institute to generate a wider funding base in order to support all the activities we wish to tackle. In the marketing area, many creative ideas were proposed, such as ways to be more descriptive in publications and contacts so that there is a clear understanding about what the Institute does. For materials development, the Institute was urged to more extensively utilize current technology such as Powerpoint, CDs, and DVDs. In discussing new avenues the Institute might explore, some suggestions were to extend to all natural settings in addition to the home and child care, explore the field of family and early childhood mental health, and emphasize sibling support. By a vote, it was determined that funding and marketing issues had the highest priority.

The afternoon and evening were spent at Sherwood Hills Conference Center and Resort in nearby Wellsville Canyon. In the afternoon, focus groups had in-depth, animated discussions of specific strategies for improving our services in Hearing, Vision, Deafblindness, Multiple Disabilities, and Administrative issues in early intervention. Focus groups shared the substance of their discussions with the whole group during the closing session of the day. An outdoor dinner was served on the lawn overlooking Wellsville Canyon, and then all participants were treated to cowboy poetry and music performed by Larry Slade.

The following week, SKI•HI Institute staff met to analyze the meeting and decide directions that could be taken. The Institute will contact individual Friends to assist in moving down these new roads. Some of the followup has been postponed until such time that a new director of the Institute is in place.

Dorothy Johnson, who has been the Co-Director of the SKI•HI [illegible] 21 in Logan. She has moved to the Seattle area where Graley resides. Dorothy worked for over 25 years as first training coordinator, then director of projects (SKI•HI Model and INSITE), and then the Institute's Co-Director. She has written grants, developed many training materials, as well as conducted training (bo basic and trainer's training) for the SKI•HI Model. She has been the SKI•HI representative to the AAHBEI board and worked on helping to put together many regional conferences associated with SKI•HI. Dorothy will continue to do some work with the SKI•HI manual and assist with some administrative tasks from h new home in Seattle until the new director position is filled. Her presence here at the Institute and within our network of sites across the country will really be missed. We wish Dorothy and Graley the greatest happiness in their new life together.

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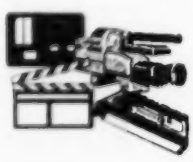
Projects Funded at the SKI•HI Institute

In May, 2000, the following Outreach Projects at SKI-HI each received a call from Washington, DC, telling them that their grant proposals for the next three years, 2000-2003, were funded: AHEAD, Deaf Mentor, and VIISA. Other projects that were funded a year or two ago and which are still moving ahead are: SPARKLE, PRIIDE, INTERACT, and SBIR.

On a more disappointing note, both the SKI-HI and INSITE Outreach Projects remain unfunded. However, the SKI-HI Institute is committed to continuing efforts, though on a more limited basis, in these two programs. This means that staff will continue to provide technical assistance by phone to states conducting trainings in INSITE and SKI-HI. Active state trainers in these programs will continue to receive the Trainer's Tidings newsletter. Trainer's training will be offered early next summer, and basic training will still be available to new states if they have funds to cover all the costs of the training. Revision of the SKI-HI manual is still going forward with the help of some funds from other sources, but revision of the INSITE manual is still up in the air.

SEARCH CONTINUES FOR A NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SKI-HI INSTITUTE

The position of Director of the SKI•HI Institute will remain open until it is officially filled. Qualifications include: Doctorate (preferred) or Master's degree in a field pertinent to the work of the Institute and the Department of Communicative Disorders and Deaf Education at USU; at least three years experience in early intervention or early education with young children with special needs and their families; ability to interact and work with professional colleagues; and demonstrated ability to write grants. If you or someone you know is interested in this position, contact Susan Watkins at (435) 797-5585 or swatkins@cc.usu.edu.



Across Disabilities ①

CHILD-TO-CHILD

HOPE, Inc., was recently awarded a Phase II Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Grant for Project Child-to-Child. During Phase I, lively and highly successful materials were developed for children K–4 to help them communicate more comfortably and successfully with their classmates who have special needs. The SBIR Phase I video received an international Telly Award. The video encouraged children to *Go* talk to your friend with special needs, *SHOW* that you are interested, and *WHOA*, don't walk away.

For Phase II, additional materials will be developed and expanded to promote fun, back-and-forth communication between non-disabled children and their disabled classmates. The materials will include simulations of hearing loss, vision impairments, deafblindness, speech or language problems, and challenges to learning. Field testing and evaluation of the effectiveness of the materials will also be conducted.

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We are pleased to announce several new materials developed by the SKI•HI Institute that will be available early 2001. The new materials include:

AHEAD in Spanish:
Finally...AHEAD is available in Spanish! AHEAD is for service providers working with children who have any special needs, and for parents, families, and child care providers.

A Helpful New Monograph, *Grandparents Caring for Young Children with Disabilities: A Labor of Love*
In this monograph, the special challenges of grandparents who are caring for grandchildren with special needs are discussed.

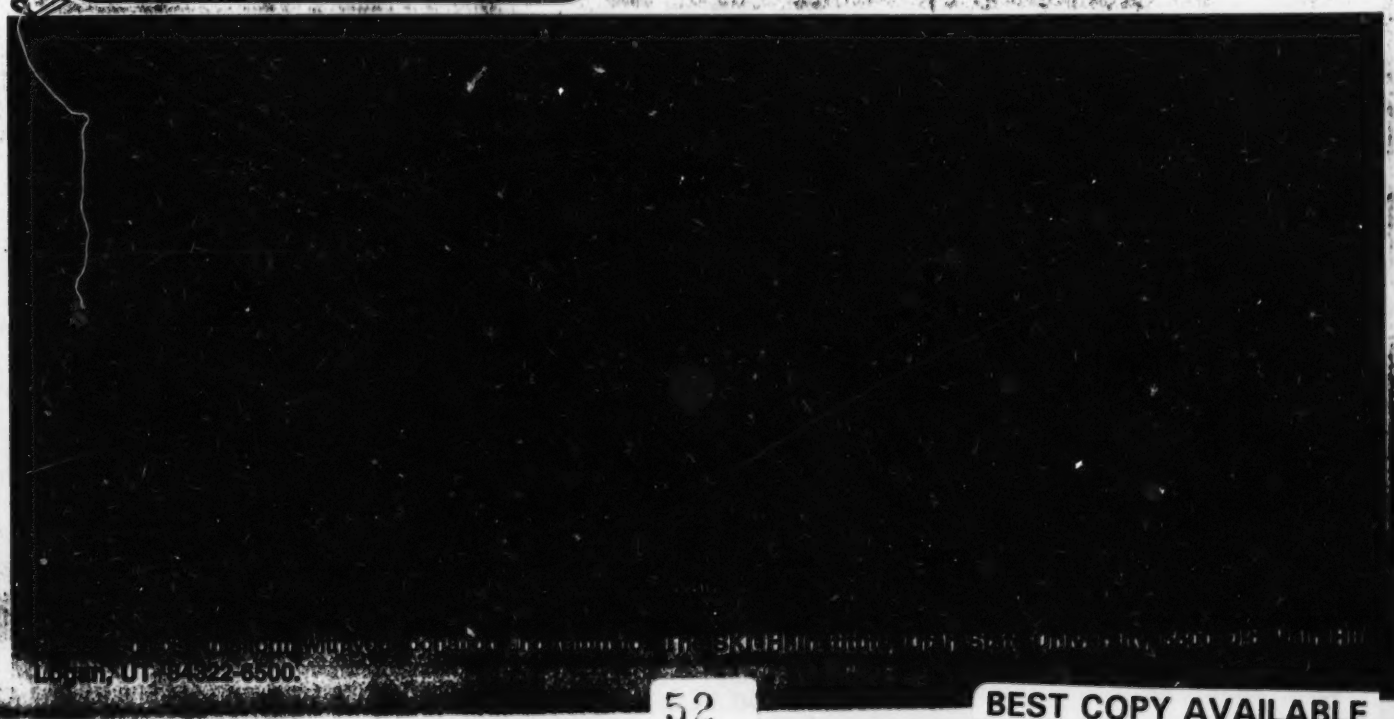
Deaf Mentor Curriculum Manual:
The curriculum includes ASL lessons that focus on key ASL concepts and skills, pictures of ASL signs and expressions, practice sentences, activities, and resources, lessons to enhance early visual communication in the family, lessons about Deaf culture, and other material that covers all aspects of Deaf Mentor programming.

An Important New Handbook, *Building Character and Confidence in Young Children with Special Needs*
This handbook is a valuable guide focusing on identifiable traits and skills that can be fostered in and taught to young children with special needs.

An Award Winning Video, *Child-to-Child* (a CD-ROM and workbook will also be available):
This program helps children K–4th grade communicate comfortably and successfully with their classmates who have special needs.

A New Curriculum for Children Who are Deafblind 0-21:
This exciting and comprehensive resource is for parents, interveners, and service providers working with children and young adults who are deafblind and their families. All aspects of deafblind programming are covered.

A New Transition Program for Children with Disabilities Including Children with Sensory Loss (manual, video, DVD):
This resource is for service providers and intervention teams who are planning and carrying out early intervention-to-preschool transitions for children with special needs.



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TRAINER'S TIDINGS

Newsletter for and about SKI-HI Institute Trainers and Instructors

Volume 9, Issue 1 *October, 2000*

Greetings!

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed about training activities of the SKI•HI Institute, as well as to share materials and ideas that can be used in training.

This issue contains:

SKI•HI Institute News

- Funded Projects
- People at SKI•HI
- VIISA Training News
- AHEAD Trainer's Training
- Deaf Mentor Training News
- Training Calendar
- Trainer News
- AAHBEI News
- New Materials at SKI•HI

Tips for Trainers and Instructors

- Tips for Creative Training Techniques
- Tips on Humor
- Ideas for Use in VIISA Training

Inspirational Material

Resources for Projects

Directory of National and Local Trainers for all the Projects

Trainer's Tidings is published twice yearly by the SKI•HI Outreach Staff.

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VIISA Training News

VIISA Trainer Training in Jacksonville, IL

Twenty-two new state VIISA instructors from five states (IL, MO, WI, MI, GA) participated in the instructor training session conducted by Sheri Moore in Jacksonville, IL in late June of this summer. The training was hosted by the Hearing and Vision Connections program located at the Illinois School for the Deaf. Gail Olson, director of the program, was a most gracious host. She made all the local arrangements for VIISA which included free housing in the campus dorm facilities. The superintendent of the School for the Deaf had the entire group to her home one evening for supper. This was the largest group of state trainers VIISA has ever conducted a training for, so the size of the group made it more challenging than usual for the national instructor. Many trainers enjoyed meeting trainers from other states and learning about their programs. Most of them will be helping to conduct VIISA courses in their own states this next year.

VIISA Trainer Training in Boston, MA

Debbie Gleason conducted the training for eleven new state VIISA instructors from RI, MA and GA at Perkins School for the Blind in late June. From the sounds of it, a great time was had by all and Debbie found this to be a most enjoyable group of professionals.

Some new ideas came out of this group, one of which the project will be implementing.... the use of rubrics in the homestudy grading process. The homestudy manual for the VIISA Infant class is now being revised to include rubrics (homestudy for Preschool class will be next). In this process, each homestudy assignment is broken down into pieces and notations are made as to how many points each piece is worth. In this way, it makes the standard of grading more clear and less subjective for state instructors in charge of reading and grading those homestudy assignments. Course participants also have a better idea as to how the assignments will be graded.

Debbie also included a new, helpful activity when going over the homestudy grading process. They did a "tag team"activity whereby different problem scenarios around the home-study process were shared and the group brainstormed on ways to handle those. Participants found that to be so helpful, that this activity will be incorporated in all VIISA instructor training sessions in the future.

National VIISA Instructors and New Parent Consultants Meet ing Logan, UT

All of the National VIISA instructors and new parent consultants traveled to Utah to spend Labor Day weekend making plans for the next few years of VIISA work. Part of this holiday weekend was spent up in the Tetons, combining work with play....a great way for us to "bond" into a strong working team.

VIISA staff meeting in the Tetons, Labor Day Weekend

Names left to right:
Top step: Debbie Gleason, Lois Hammett, Bess (Morgan) Dennison, Sheri Moore (her son Scott Moore is in upper right corner); *Middle step*: Irene Topor; *Bottom step*: Tanni Anthony and Stacy King

TRAINING CALENDAR

Project	Training	Location	Date
INSITE	Basic Training State Team	Knoxville, TN	Onsite #1: October 12–14 Onsite #2: November 2–4
INSITE	Basic Training State Team	Florida	Onsite #1: October 13–15 Onsite #2: November 10–12
INSITE	Basic Training State Team	Missouri	Onsite #1: July Onsite #2: November 10–12
INSITE	Basic Training State Team	Arkansas	Onsite #1: November 15–17 Onsite #2: November 27–29
SKI•HI	Basic Training State Team	Florida	W/S #1: February 9–11, 2001 W/S #2: March 16–18, 2001
AHEAD	Basic Training State Team	Florida	will be conducting multiple trainings in regions of the state this year
VIISA	Preschool Class State Team & Gleason	Michigan	Onsite #1: October 26–28 Onsite #2: February 8–10, 2001
VIISA	Preschool Class State Team	Oklahoma	Onsite #1: November 15–17 Onsite #2: January 17–19, 2001
VIISA	Infant Class State Team	Illinois	Onsite #1: November 28–29 Onsite #2: February 27–28, 2001
VIISA	Infant Class State Team & Moore	New Mexico	Onsite #1: December 1–3 Onsite #2: January 29–31, 2001

This year, Ohio will be conducting INSITE, SKI•HI, and VIISA trainings for interventionists. Contact Kim Christiansen at (419) 372-7299 for dates.

VIISA classes are being planned this winter and spring 2001 in AZ, FL, IL, IA, KS, MA.

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Tips for State VIISA Instructors

(Note: Some of these may be helpful to SKI•HI and INSITE Trainers as well.)

When the national VIISA instructors and new parent consultants met in Logan this fall, many ideas were shared and discussed about ways VIISA training can be improved. We will attempt to share some of these ideas in the next few pages. Opportunities for ways you can contribute will be described below. If you decide to participate, e-mail your responses to Bess (Morgan) Dennison at emorgan@cc.usu.edu or send them to me at SKI•HI. A big star is noted by each one.

Various Ways to Use the State VIISA Training Team

Many states have found that after several years of offering VIISA courses, the number of individuals wanting the training goes down. They guess that perhaps they have saturated the audience for a full VIISA course for a year or two. So, several states have gotten creative and used members of their VIISA team to conduct short miniworkshops in regions of the state on topics of need and concern related to young children with vision loss, using their VIISA training material as a resource. By doing this, they often meet the needs of a larger number of people, many of whom are unwilling to commit to a full VIISA class. However, from these larger audiences, they begin to build an awareness of and interest in VIISA training and pull participants for their next course from these shorter sessions and larger audience. So it seems that these states cycle from offering full VIISA courses to more regional miniworkshops back to full VIISA courses.

☆ As mentioned earlier in this issue, the project will be working on some training packages that state instructors could use in conducting miniworkshops on "hot topics" in the preschool vision field in their state. If as an instructor, you would like to help put one of these together in a topic area that you have a lot of knowledge and experience with, let us know ASAP. Some of the "hot topics" brought up were: early literacy, CVI, prematurity, medical updates, autism and blindness, assistive technology, delayed visual maturation, etc. We would love to hear from you.

Helping Participants Get Into the VIISA Curriculum Manual More

There was much discussion on how to tie the use of the curriculum manual more strongly with the course content. So, one of the national instructors will be rewriting the training package "Getting Started" for each course to suggest ways to do this. Copies of this will be sent to your state contact to get to each of you. Very often, course participants will ask for information on certain topics which are covered quite well in the VIISA curriculum manual. So we need to be sure that they understand just what is in that manual and where.

Working with Varied Audiences

This age-old problem will probably always be there for state instructors....how to keep everyone happy or meeting the needs of a varied audience. Here were a few ideas discussed:

1. Have the ice breaker on the first day be about having them share what their background is.

This will help you get an idea as to who your audience is so you can make adjustments as needed.

2. When you know you have a group of people (e.g., vision folks) who have a lot of background on a particular topic, be sure to check-in with them periodically to see how they are feeling about the content and what would help them feel more challenged. There may be some topics where it might be best to separate them from the class members who have little background with young children with vision loss. With more

New Resources for VIISA and INSITE

Title	Description	Cost	Address
In Celebration of Grandparents	This new book is written to help parents of children with vision impairments or blindness better understand how they can engage constructively in direct and indirect support of their loved ones dealing with visual impairment	$18	NAPVI (National Association for Parents of the Visually Impaired) PO Box 317 Watertown, MA 02471 (800) 562-6265
Focus on Social Skills (video)	American Foundation for the Blind has a new series of videos on helping children with visual impairments develop social skills. The series was developed by Karen Wolffe and Sharon Sacks. One of the videos in the new series is "Teaching Social Skills to Visually Impaired Preschoolers."	$40	(Available soon from) AFB 11 Penn Plaza New York, NY 10001.A www.afb.org/catalog99
Materials in Spanish for Families of (and Interventionists Serving) Infants and Young Children who are Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deafblind	Division 8: Infant and Preschool of AER is selling a booklet put togther by the VIISA Project and Hilton Perkins as a fundraiser for the Division. This booklet provides information on a variety of booklets, videos, and articles available in Spanish from various sources across the country. The information is in both Spanish and English.	$10	Contact Bess (Morgan) Dennison VIISA Project SKI•HI Institute emorgan@cc.usu.edu or (435) 797-5593
New Articles in JVIB Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness	An article on the VIISA Project will be appearing in the November issues of JVIB this school year, so keep your eye out for it. There was also an article on Lilli Nielsen's Active Learning Approach and the Little Room in the September 2000 issue of JVIB		JVIB
New Articles from other Journals	"Preverbal Communicative Competence: An Essential Step in the Lives of Infants with Severe Physical Impairment". It is a must for people working with these very involved infants. The April 2000 Issue of this same journal had many excellent articles as well as topics such as natural environments, assistive technology for very young children, early identification-educational methods, and cochlear implants-controversies in the field of hearing impaired.		Infants and Young Children (July 2000 Issue) Aspen Publisher
First Look: Vision Evaluation and Assessment for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers, Birth Through Age 5	This booklet is about vision evaluation and assessment in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers ages birth through five.	$10	California Dept. of Education SPED Division 515 L Street, Suite 270 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 327-3703

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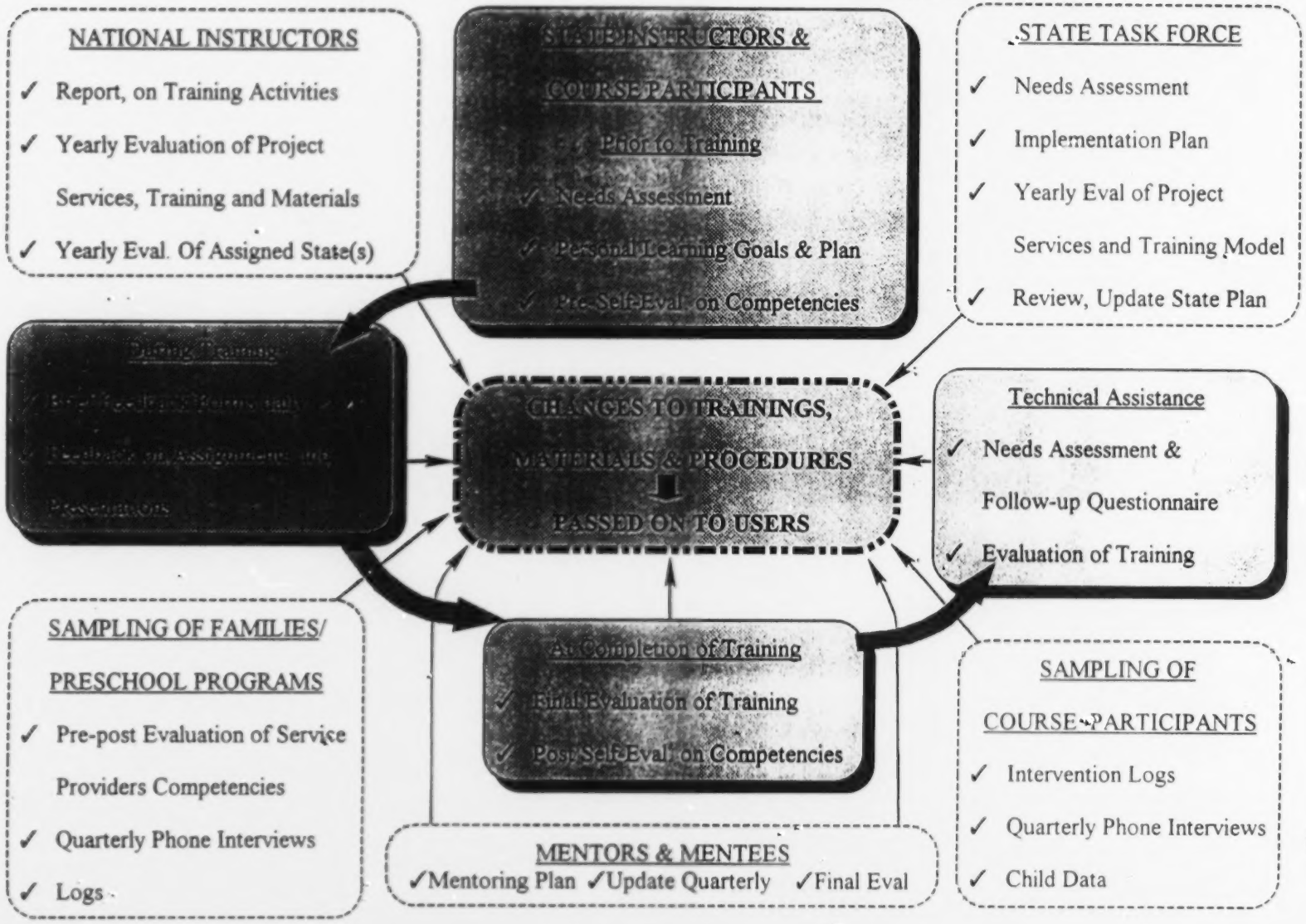
Directory of
National
and Local
Trainers for
all the
Projects

APPENDIX 3

Overview of Evaluation Design

EVALUATION OF VIISA: DATA SOURCES AND FEEDBACK MODEL


NATIONAL INSTRUCTORS
✓ Report, on Training Activities
✓ Yearly Evaluation of Project Services, Training and Materials
✓ Yearly Eval. Of Assigned State(s)
STATE INSTRUCTORS & COURSE PARTICIPANTS
✓ Prior to Training
✓ Needs Assessment
✓ Personal Learning Goals & Plan
✓ Pre-Self-Eval on Competencies
STATE TASK FORCE
✓ Needs Assessment
✓ Implementation Plan
✓ Yearly Eval of Project Services and Training Model
✓ Review, Update State Plan
CHANGES TO TRAININGS, MATERIALS & PROCEDURES PASSED ON TO USERS
Technical Assistance
✓ Needs Assessment & Follow-up Questionnaire
✓ Evaluation of Training
SAMPLING OF FAMILIES/ PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS
✓ Pre-post Evaluation of Service Providers Competencies
✓ Quarterly Phone Interviews
✓ Logs
At Completion of Training
✓ Final Evaluation of Training
✓ Post Self-Eval on Competencies
SAMPLING OF COURSE PARTICIPANTS
✓ Intervention Logs
✓ Quarterly Phone Interviews
✓ Child Data
MENTORS & MENTEES
✓Mentoring Plan ✓Update Quarterly ✓Final Eval

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Summary of Evaluation Plan

Major Area	*Evaluation Information & Timeline, Type of Instrument, and Who is Responsible*	*Appendix*
A. Effect of outreach assistance on the state	1. The state will complete an application for VIISA services which will provide information on the state's needs prior to implementation.	1
	2.State goals, action plan, time lines written at preplanning session with national instructor at the beginning of implementation. Updated yearly.	1
	3.State contacts and training team members complete an Evaluation/ Needs Assessment at the end of each year of implementation of VISA	1,2,3,4
	4. The National VIISA Instructor submit a yearly report on the status of VIISA implementation in their assigned state.	2
	5. Data from training evaluations, technical assistance reports and contact notes.	4
B. Effect of the state's implementation team process	1.Information will be obtained from training evaluations as well as many of the items listed in A above such as the state goals and action plan.	
C. Effect of training on state instructors	1. State instructors complete a profile, rate their competencies and set goals prior to the instructor training session.	3
	2. State instructors will complete an evaluation on their National VIISA Instructor and the training received after the initial 3-day instructor training session. They will also set new goals for the year with strategies and activities to meet those.	3
	3. The National VIISA Instructor will provide feedback to state instructors through their first course series.	3
	4. Final course evaluations will also provide instructors with feedback from participants on how they are doing as trainers.	4
	5. State instructors will complete an Evaluation/Needs Assessment Form at the end of teaching their first course(s) as well as evaluate themselves on the original trainer competencies and note progress on goals set.	3

Major Area	*Evaluation Information & Timeline, Type of Instrument, and Who is Responsible*	*Appendix*
D. Effect of training on early intervention/early childhood/vision personnel	1. Participants complete rate their competencies and set goals at the first onsite of the course they are participating in.	4
	2. Participants select a family to give a pre self-eval to and fill a pre self-eval out on that family as well. Both parties mail it to the project.	4
	3. Participants complete a final course evaluation at the end of the training (after the second onsite of the course), rate self on course competencies and set new goals with action plan for the year.	4
	4. Participants give the post self-eval to the same family selected above and fill it out on that family as well. Both parties mail it to project.	4
	5. Instructors evaluate participant performance through grading of home study assignments and class participation throughout the VIISA course.	4
	6. VIISA Project will conduct a follow-up survey with VIISA participants once within each grant period to determine the impact of training on their service delivery and needs for follow-up and support.	
E. Effect of training on families and children	1. A small sample of interventionists serving the families above will be paid to provide the following portfolio of desired information at six month intervals: monthly home visit or lesson plans and progress notes; demographics; medical/diagnostic.	6
	2. A small sample of parents who have been receiving services from an interventionist participating in the VIISA training will be paid to provide the following portfolio of desired information at six month intervals: monthly journal of interventions and progress notes; a pre/post questionnaire on services received.	6
	3.A member of the project evaluation team will make a 10-15 minute call to the parents and their interventionist noted above three times a year to discuss the child's program, progress, and impact of VIISA training on their services.	6
	4. The above information will be used to write case studies that tell the stories of these children and their families.	6
	5. Each course participant will be asked to select a family to give the pre/post eval. on course objectives to fill out.	6

F. Effect of training on local agencies	1. A pre-post questionnaire will be sent to the supervisors of VIISA training participants in each agency to collect needs assessment data at the beginning and again a year after training.	5
G. Mentoring	1. Planning form with goals and action plan for mentoring activities to support goals is written up front; updated/reviewed quarterly by team.	7
	2. Mentor and mentee complete evaluation of components of the mentor piece at the end of the year.	7
	3. Mentor supervisor keeps notes through the year about mentor activities, communication with mentors and mentees, etc.	7

VIISA Evaluation Plan

Schedule of Who, What, When, Where			
Person to Fill Form Out	**Evaluation Form/ Procedure**	**When Completed**	**Person Responsible for Sending to Project Office in Utah**
National Instructor	✓ National Instructor report on VIISA site	✓ Once a year on each state they have been working with	✓ National Instructor (NI)
State Contact/ Task Force	✓ Application for VIISA Outreach	✓ When state decides to implement VIISA	✓ State Task Force
	✓Goals/Action Plan	✓At preplan meeting	✓State Contact
	✓ Status Report, Evaluation, & Needs Survey	✓ Once a year after VIISA course(s) are taught	✓ State Contact; Utah shares with NI
State Instructors	✓ Trainer Profiles with pre self-eval and goal sheet	✓ Prior to the Trainers' Training	✓ State Contact mails & collects; sends to NI who later mails them to project
	✓ Evaluation of Trainers' Training, post-self eval & goals	✓ Immediately after Trainers' Training	✓ National Instructor
	✓ Instructor Feedback, Self-Evaluation/Summary	✓ After each onsite class	✓ NI summarizes & sends to project in training report
	✓ Follow-up & Post Self-Eval, Goals, & Needs Assessment	✓ Once a year, after VIISA course(s) are complete	✓ Project Office in Utah mails out, collects, summarizes, shares results with state and NI

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Person to Fill Form Out	Evaluation Form/ Procedure	When Completed	Person Responsible for Sending to Project Office in Utah
Participants	✓ Pre self-eval with goals	✓ At onsite one of the course	✓ State Contact collects and sends to project
	✓ Pre eval on course objectives as priorities to give a family and to fill out on that family	✓ At end of onsite one	✓Participants and families mail back to project in self-addressed stamped envelope given
	✓ Final Course Eval & post self-eval, goals	✓ At the last onsite of each course	✓ State Contact collects and sends to project
	✓ Post eval on course objectives as priorities to give a family and to fill out on that family	✓ After the last onsite of each course	✓Participants and families mail back to project in self-addressed stamped envelope given
	✓ Follow-up Survey, goals	✓ At the end of each three year grant period	✓ Project office (UT) disseminates to course participants who submit surveys back to Utah. Project summarizes & shares results with state and NI
Local Agencies Delivering Services (must get those serving the families used in data collection below)	✓ Questionnaire completed by supervisor of programs VIISA course participants work for	✓ At the beginning and end of each grant year	✓Project office mails to supervisors who then complete and send them back to Utah
Families of Children (Project Office will recruit and select, with state contact help, a small number of families nationwide and pay each $100 a year to participate in this data collection activity)	✓ A loose leaf binder with the following in it: • Pages for journal of child progress and intervention notes • Family questionnaire about intervention • Place to put medical and diagnostic report, IFSP or IEP	• Ongoing through the year • Fall, Winter, Spring of each year • Ongoing	✓ Parent sends first half of year information to project and receives $50. Sends second half at end of year to receive the second $50 payment; a reminder call may be needed from the Project Office in UT
	✓ 10–15 minute phone interview initiated by Project Evaluator	✓ Fall, Winter, Spring of each year	

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Person to Fill Form Out	Evaluation Form/ Procedure	When Completed	Person Responsible for Sending to Project Office in Utah
VIISA Course Participants who work with above families (Project Office will recruit and select, with state contact help, a small number of course participants nationwide and pay each $100 a year to participate in this data collection activity)	✓ A loose leaf binder with the following: • Section with copies of home visit reports/ progress notes (for infants); informal journal/ lesson plans (for preschooler) • Section with assessment information, demographics, medical/diagnostic reports ✓ 10–15 minute phone interview initiated by Project Evaluator in Utah	• Ongoing through year • Ongoing through year ✓ Fall, Winter, Spring of each year	✓ Participant sends first half of year information to project and receives $50. Sends second half at end of year to receive the second $50 payment
Mentor, Mentee, Mentor Supervisor	✓ Mentor with mentee write goals/action plan and update it. ✓ Evaluation of Mentoring components	✓ Fall, Winter, Spring of each year ✓ End of year	✓ Mentor mails to supervisor who then sends copies to Utah ✓ Mentor supervisor sends to Utah

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